New migrants' social integration, embedding and emplacement in superdiverse contexts

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Abstract
This article focuses on how newcomers form social relations when settling in the UK, and the role of these relations in regards to their sense of belonging as well as access to resources that support integration. By bringing together the concept of social integration with scholarship on embedding and sociabilities of emplacement, the article demonstrates how a combination of serendipitous encounters, 'crucial acquaintances' and more enduring friendships with other migrants, co-ethnics and members of the majority population support migrants' settlement. Drawing on two qualitative studies on migrant settlement, it shows the importance of social relations with other migrants during settlement, and subsequently critically reflects on how the notion of 'bridging social capital' has been used in policy discourse. By doing so, the article contends that the notion of 'integration' needs to reflect the social 'unit' into which migrants are supposed to integrate.

Keywords: Embedding, emplacement, integration, migrants, social capital

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Scholarship on migrant settlement has looked at various aspects of how new arrivals forge a new life, ranging from practical aspects around housing, jobs, welfare and information about settlement, to issues around emotional adjustment, belonging and the formation of new friendships. This article focuses on the latter, namely on how recent migrants form social relations when settling in the UK, and how these social relations contribute to their settlement through enabling the development of a sense of belonging or access to resources that support integration. It brings together scholarship which has conceptualized this social aspect of settlement with the notion of 'social integration' (Phillimore 2012; Vermeulen & Penninx 2000), with that which has attempted to broaden the focus on migrant social relations with the notions of 'embedding' (Ryan & Mulholland, 2015), and 'sociability of emplacement' (Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2016). By drawing together these concepts, and relating these to empirical data on migrant settlement, the article significantly advances scholarship on how different types of relationships shape migrants' settlement process both practically and emotionally, bringing an original new perspective. It identifies three types of relations: brief and often serendipitous encounters, more regular 'crucial acquaintances', and friendships. By identifying different types of relations and considering their association with the concepts of integration, embedding and sociabilities of emplacement, the article shifts social integration scholarship forward,

developing a more nuanced picture of the connection between social relations and settlement, and contesting policy and academic arguments about the importance of bridging capital.

Much scholarship on the social aspect of migrant settlement has focused on the role of social relations in regards to migrants' socio-economic or educational advancement, generally referred to with the notion of 'social capital' (Bourdieu, 1986; Portes, 1998). Especially in policy discourse, 'bridging social capital' (Putnam, 2000), namely social relations with members of 'other groups' (implicitly members of the majority society), has been described as instrumental in migrants' settlement. In this discourse, migrants who primarily form social relations with co-ethnics tend to be seen as 'not integrated' (Casey, 2016; Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2007). Others, however, have shown that all types of social networks are important for integration (Cheung & Phillimore 2014). Building on this latter work, this article moves beyond the negative policy discourse about social relations with co-ethnics and the assumption that only bridging social capital with members of the majority society furthers integration. The article demonstrates that different types of social relations, often formed with other migrants of various national backgrounds, can change a newcomer's course of settlement, and that migrants might be well embedded within migrant social networks, which sometimes enable pathways into housing or work (Bloch & McKay, 2014), and could thus also be described as 'migrant social capital'. By demonstrating the importance of migrant social capital, especially in contexts characterised by superdiversity (Vertovec, 2007), the article thus questions the idea of integration into a 'white British majority'.

In fact, newly emerging patterns of superdiversity in urban contexts, characterized by the proliferation of cross-cutting categories such as differentiations of legal statuses, educational backgrounds, migration routes, religious backgrounds, etc. raise new questions regarding the notion of integration (see Phillimore et al. 2017). The settlement of migrants into superdiverse contexts highlights unresolved criticisms of integration, which asked what 'unit' migrants were supposed to integrate into, an ethnic group, local community, social group or more generally British society (Castles et al., 2002:114)? There seems to be a missing link in public debates between integration and superdiversity, especially in light of recent calls to enhance shared values and 'Britishness' (however vaguely defined) which put the onus of integration on ethnic minorities and migrants rather than the long-settled (Casey, 2016).

What kinds of societies do new migrants living in superdiverse neighbourhoods integrate into? Do they get the opportunity to form the kinds of 'bridging' social relations imagined to be crucial for migrant integration? What kinds of social relations are important in facilitating settlement? In this paper, we set out new ways of thinking about social integration into superdiverse contexts, highlighting how newcomers in such contexts not only build social relations with either white British people or co-ethnics, but also with ethnic minority British people and other migrants who have similar experiences of settlement, but with whom they do not necessarily share the same national or ethnic origin. We begin by setting out the theoretical concepts of integration, embedding and sociabilities of emplacement before outlining the research methods. The empirical part of the paper starts by discussing fleeting encounters, followed by a discussion of the role of crucial acquaintances, and ending with the role of deeper friendships.

Social integration, embedding and sociabilities of emplacement

The concepts of social integration, embedding and sociabilities of emplacement all refer to how migrants forge social relations which enhance their connectedness with the place in which they settle and the wider society around them. The concept of social integration has been the most

widely used across disciplines in regards to migrant settlement, including in policy discourse, and, accordingly, has been contested across academic disciplines (Ager & Strang, 2008). Embedding is a broader notion which came out of economic sociology while sociabilities of emplacement, developed by Glick Schiller and Çağlar, has not yet entered wider policy and academic discourses. The concepts of embedding and sociabilities of emplacement relate less to the role of social relations in regards to practical aspects of settlement, but more to notions of belonging, here defined as emotional attachment to a social group or location and feeling at home (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

Social Integration

'Integration' has generally been used in public and academic discourse to refer to processes that entail the socio-economic, political, social and cultural adaptation of newcomers, and emergence of shared social relations, values, and practices, including, at least in theory, the adaptation of the long-settled population to newcomers (Ager & Strang, 2008; Jenkins, 1967; Phillimore 2012). Sociologists have differentiated between different realms of integration such as structural, social and cultural integration (Heckmann & Schnapper, 2003); which, in the British policy context, have been conceptualized as 'indicators of integration' (Ager & Strang 2008).

'Social integration' refers to the relations migrants establish after they arrive in a new country. Such relations can be with members of the receiving society, through clubs, associations and institutions, or with co-ethnics. Importantly, social integration is considered to be instrumental regarding access to more structural aspects of integration because information about jobs, housing and schools is often gained through social connectedness (Vermeulen & Penninx, 2000).

This more instrumental aspect of social integration has been connected to the notion of social capital, which refers to the resources gained from 'durable networks of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition' (Bourdieu, 1986:248). Social capital is thus defined by its 'ability to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks' (Portes, 1998:6). In literature on migrant settlement, notions of 'bonding' and 'bridging' social capital within and between groups has been widely referred to (Putnam 2001; Ager & Strang 2008). Especially in policy discourses around cohesion, bonding social capital, which is conceptualised as being formed with co-ethnics, has been interpreted as having negative effects on integration. In the migration literature, bonding social capital has been described as lacking influence (Bloch & McKay 2014). It has been contrasted with 'bridging social capital', i.e. social relations formed with members of the majority society (Casey, 2016; Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2007) which is argued by policymakers to better support the development of language skills, social mobility and belonging. These ideas, however, have been disputed both theoretically (i.e. Ryan et al., 2009) and empirically (Cheung & Phillimore 2016; Phillimore et al. 2017), with authors showing how bonding social capital can play a crucial role in migrant integration both in regards to practical aspects as well as providing emotional stability (Ager & Strang, 2008). Furthermore, the notion of 'bridging social capital' has been criticised for putting the burden primarily on migrants rather than the majority society (Hickman et al. 2012) and for assuming that ethnicity and religion define the boundaries within and beyond which migrants build bonding and bridging social capital (Ryan 2011). The instrumental and affective benefits drawn from social networks can be difficult to differentiate and assess (Boyd, 1989). The ideas of sociabilities of emplacement and embedding attempt to bring these two aspects together, showing the fuzzy boundaries between instrumental and affective functions, and that many of the social relations formed by migrants during settlement combine both.

Embedding

Embedding is a concept which was originally coined in economics to refer to the fact that economic acts are not isolated, but embedded within social relations and non-economic kinship, political and religious institutions (Granovetter, 1985; Polanyi, Arensberg, & Pearson, 1957). The concept has been developed across social sciences disciplines, including in scholarship on migration and migrant settlement (Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993; Ryan & Mulholland, 2015). Korinek et al. (2005:780) define embeddedness as 'social relationships that foster a sense of rootedness and integration in the local environment'. In their overview of the concept, Ryan and Mulholland (2015) emphasise the temporal and spatial aspects of embedding, and its changing nature over time and place. Referring to scholarship in geography (Findlay & Stockdale, 2003; Robinson, 2010), they emphasise the necessity to 'acknowledge the materiality of place', and to take into account the fact that opportunities and resources which migrants can draw on are conditioned by the 'socio-economic, cultural and physical particularities of the local areas in which they live and work' (Ryan and Mulholland 2015:139). Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2016) similarly emphasise the importance of taking into account the positioning of a city within multi-scalar hierarchies of power, and how this affects the ways in which both migrants as well as long-term residents forge social relations. Related to the socio-economic structures of a place are also migrants' specific strategies of embedding and motivations to form social relations. Glick Schiller and Çağlar's refugee research participants, for example, actively attempted to create social relations with long-established residents because of a lack of institutional support. In contrast to these more disadvantaged refugees, Ryan and Mulholland (2015:139) point out that more highly skilled and affluent migrants might have different 'embedding strategies', for example within the professional realm.

Scholars have differentiated between different levels of embeddedness, distinguishing between household, workplace, neighbourhood and wider community embeddedness (Korinek et al. 2005) and different domains of embeddedness (Ryan and Mullholand 2015). Ryan and Mullholand (2015) point out that migrants can be embedded in one domain but not the others. Similarly, there can be different 'degrees of embeddedness' (ibid. 2015:141) and different 'depths of embeddedness across various domains' (ibid. 2015:150), depending on the content as well as the structure of social networks. Embedding is conceived of as a process rather than a static state. The notion of sociabilities of emplacement speaks to ideas about the depth of embeddedness, referring to more engaging social relations which contribute to a sense of belonging.

Sociabilities of emplacement

To describe the variegated ways in which migrants form social relations upon settlement, Glick Schiller et al. developed the concept of 'sociabilities of emplacement' (Glick Schiller et al. 2011). They draw on long-standing scholarship in urban sociology (Simmel, 1995 [1903]; Tönnies, 2005 [1887]), referring to sociability as interaction which 'is built on certain shared human competencies to relate to multiple other persons as well as a desire for human relationships that are not confined to or framed around solely utilitarian goals' (Glick Schiller et al., 2011:414-415). These cannot simply be described as friendships, as sometimes they can be of limited durability. Importantly, the focus of 'sociability' lies on relations in which individuals see each other as equal (Simmel & Hughes, 1949). Although sociabilities 'may include relationships of social support, providing help, protection, resources and further social connections', they are different from the social relations described in bridging social capital because they provide 'pleasure, satisfaction and meaning' by giving actors a

'mutual sense of being human' rather than being predominantly functional (Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2016:19). This mutuality represents a shift away from the focus of 'social integration', which, particularly in policy thinking, places the onus on migrants to become part of a society through building bridging capital.

With 'emplacement', Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2013:495) refer to 'a person's efforts to settle and build networks of connection within the constraints and opportunities of a specific locality'. They show how refugees in the US town of Manchester actively seek social relations with long-established residents who might help them settle. Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2016) found three types of setting in which such sociabilities were forged: among neighbours or people who lived nearby, in workplaces, and in institutional spaces such as churches, schools and libraries. Their focus on local relations breaks down the distinctions between co-ethnics and majority residents that has dominated the attention of researchers and policymakers in migration research, although it pays insufficient attention to other kinds of relations, for example those established via social media which can also contribute to sense of belonging and provide meaning (Phillimore et al. 2017).

The concepts of social integration, embedding and sociabilities of emplacement are useful in thinking about migrant settlement, and, as we will demonstrate in the empirical section of this paper, in showing different steps and degrees in migrants' pathways towards integration. Before doing so, we will briefly discuss the methods used for the empirical research.

Methods

The article draws on two qualitative research projects undertaken with recent migrants of varying immigration status, who have arrived within the last ten years, in East London, Luton and Birmingham (UK) (see Appendix for respondent information). Rather than comparing the two datasets, this article draws on two research projects in order to expand the sample and identify common patterns of processes of immigrant settlement. Thus, for the first time, we combine the two datasets and analysing them both with a new theoretical perspective. One project focussed on 'pioneer migrants' who lack social capital when arriving in the UK (Wessendorf 2017a). Respondents were selected on the basis that they could not draw on the help of an established 'community' when arriving in the UK. The study was undertaken from 2014-17, and included 49 in-depth interviews, 4 focus groups with recent migrants who had arrived within the last ten years, and 22 interviews with people working in the migrant sector, involving a total of 98 respondents. Research participants were found through personal social networks formed during previous fieldwork (in the case of London) (Wessendorf 2014), snowball sampling, religious and voluntary organisations, and English classes. Respondents came from 42 Countries of origin (see Table 1). Ages ranged from twenty-three to fifty, with thirty-one female and sixteen male interviewees. Fourteen respondents were EU citizens and five had acquired UK citizenship prior to the research. Eight were in the UK on spousal visas, two on a work visa, eight had refugee status, four were asylum seekers and five were either undocumented migrants or refused asylum seekers. Five respondents did not speak English.

The second project was undertaken in 2013-14 and focussed on interviews with 29 new migrants from 14 different countries who had arrived up to two years before the study commenced. This study used a maximum variation sample approach, wherein a small number of cases were selected that maximized diversity relevant to the research issue (Patton 2005). Interviewees were identified by approaching migrant support organisations, a college and a local authority equality and diversity team, researchers' personal networks, word of mouth and directly approaching people in public places. Eighteen respondents were male and eleven were female. Ages ranged from 22 to 61

with four interviewees claiming asylum; seven granted refugee status, 12 migrating to join a spouse; two students and four economic migrants. Some 13 were living with a family member and 20 spoke English.

For both projects interviews were either undertaken in English, in the respondents' mother tongue if spoken by one of our researchers, or with the aid of an interpreter. Using organisations and networks means that most respondents inevitably had some kind of network at the point of interview. However our retrospective approach enabled us to understand network formation in the period before they made that connection. Clearly, we were dependent on the selective memories of respondents. It is highly likely that they had experiences which they either could not, or did not want to, recall. Data were coded using a systematic thematic analysis approach (Guest 2012) to identify the key issues raised by respondents. This involved interpretive code-and-retrieve methods wherein the data was transcribed and read by the research team who identified codes and undertook an interpretative thematic analysis. The quotations used in this paper were selected on the basis of their ability to illustrate those issues.

Ethical approval was gained for both projects in advance of fieldwork being undertaken and full written consent was received from all respondents. Research participants quoted in this article could choose to change their names.

Findings

Encounters and their importance in terms of emplacement, embedding and integration were highly varied with many respondents experiencing different kinds of encounters with different degrees of depth and importance. For example Alisher came to the UK from Uzbekistan as a student, but was unable to return due to political problems in his homeland. After claiming asylum, he was dispersed to Norwich by the Home Office. When his claim was refused, he had nowhere to go but London, which was the only place where he could imagine finding help. Without money to travel he went to the police station to ask for advice. A police officer accompanied him to the train station and convinced the conductor to let him board. This simple gesture enabled Alisher to get to London where he spent the first few nights sleeping on buses, eventually becoming ill and being admitted to hospital. The nurse who treated him gave him a list of daycentres. Through one of the centres, he accessed a Winter Night Shelter, where he met a Colombian woman who found him accommodation at a hostel. There he found out about the Red Cross, from where he was referred to a Catholic organisation, which found him accommodation at another night shelter. This is where he met his 'first English friend', Peter. He described how Peter, who invited Alisher to spend time with his family, became close and gave him insight into 'the English way of life'.

Alisher's story represents different steps towards social integration and embedding, ranging from fleeting encounters to a deeper friendship with someone 'local' who enabled him to feel a sense of inclusion in what he describes as the 'English way of life'. The policeman, the nurse and other individuals in the institutions he passed through provided important gestures of support which represented turning points in Alisher's life. The friendship with Peter represents the kind of sociability of emplacement exemplified in Glick Schiller and Çağlar's work which highlights relationships between newcomers and long-term residents as relationships based on commonalities rather than differences. It could, however, also be described as an example of 'bridging social capital' as it enabled Alisher to learn more about life in the UK. We now move on to examine these different types of social relations during settlement, starting with the role of fleeting encounters in

public spaces, moving on to more regular encounters, and ending with more enduring social relations.

Fleeting encounters

Sometimes, it just takes one person to make a difference in an individual's settlement. Most of these encounters are serendipitous, and many of our research participants only realized with hindsight how crucial a particular encounter was. Shiima, an asylum seeker from Egypt who lives in Birmingham, felt lost when first arriving in London. She heard a man speaking in Arabic on the phone in a café and asked him for help, saying she wanted to apply for asylum. He pointed her to the Home Office in Croydon where she applied and was then dispersed to Birmingham. She has never again seen the man who first helped her, but this serendipitous encounter enabled her to begin the legal process of formally settling in the UK.

Serendipitous encounters can also be crucial for people who have a secure legal status. Bertin and his girlfriend knew no one in London when they arrived from Spain. Their English was limited, and they spent their first two weeks in a hostel. After two chaotic weeks they decided to go to the cinema where, for the first time since they arrived, they bumped into a Spanish woman who helped them find cheaper accommodation. Maryam, a Chechen woman who grew up in Latvia, by chance met two Russian speaking waitresses in a restaurant. She spoke to them in Russian, and they encouraged her to apply for a job in the restaurant. Although she spoke hardly any English, she got the job, and with the help of her Russian speaking colleagues, managed to slowly improve her English – gaining important language skills frequently seen as one of the benefits of bridging social capital. Other respondents recalled how chance encounters – often with someone speaking their mother tongue, on buses or even in the street resulted in advice that was critical in facilitating access to integration resources. For example Raj met a fellow Sikh on the street in Birmingham and was sent to a support organisation which helped him with his visa, while Arian, an Iraqi Kurd, bumped into some Kurds in a restaurant who told him about work opportunities in another restaurant. In both studies serendipitous and often fleeting encounters were important in the process of settlement. Importantly, it did not matter whether these encounters were with long-settled migrants or British people. In fact, other migrants, who are one step further along the path of settlement, and who spoke the same language, were often better equipped to help.

It is difficult to conceptualize the encounters described as social networks or social capital, as they are characterized by what has also been described as 'weak ties', which can be crucial for accessing resources outside one's immediate social networks (Granovetter 1973). In the case of new arrivals, they offer the first steps towards social as well as structural integration, as they entail practical support. While such fleeting encounters are crucial regarding settlement and lead to further resources such as housing and work, they do not necessarily foster a stronger sense of belonging. However, as mentioned earlier, the boundaries between practical and affective functions of social relations are blurry, which we demonstrate further in the following sections.

Crucial acquaintances

Many research participants talked about social relations which they did not describe as friendships, but which were crucial for their settlement. These can be, for example, with work colleagues or housemates, or with people in Civil Society Organisations such as places of worship. Of course, such social relations can, but not always do turn into friendships.

Alisher, for example, mentioned above, found a job at a Turkish restaurant while still studying. Through this job, he not only improved his English, but also his Turkish, which is closely related to Uzbek. At the restaurant, he met a French woman, who became a close friend. All of these relationships helped him feel more embedded within the city. Similarly, Hasmik from Armenia, who lives in Birmingham, felt greatly supported by her work colleagues at a GP practice, where she started working as an administrator shortly after arrival. After feeling very insecure, her British South Asian colleagues greatly helped her build her confidence and supported her with various aspects of settlement.

Andreea from Romania experienced her Irish landlady, Martha, as a life saviour when she was faced with financial difficulties after her husband lost his job and they were unable to pay the rent. Initially, Martha threatened to evict them, but when she found out Andreea was pregnant she provided them with food and let them stay for as long as they needed. When Andreea was 38 weeks pregnant and had no money to buy things for her baby, Martha helped:

> …. she said: 'Andreea don't worry, in one week you will have everything'. (…). So the landlady spoke to her daughter, and her daughter put a piece of paper in the church (…) 'Romanian couple expecting a baby in two weeks, they don't have anything for the baby'. In one week they had to get a van, because it was so much stuff in that week. I had clothes for our son up to two years, nappies, wipes, toys, powder, milk, bottles, dummies, everything, even for myself, all the things you need after giving birth, so many things.

When her husband found work again they repaid all of the rent and moved to a bigger place. Andreea's relationship with Martha is a typical example of the kind of 'sociability of emplacement' described by Glick Schiller and Çağlar, based on a mutual sense of being human between a long-established resident and a newcomer. Although they did not stay close friends, the relationship with Martha was a turning point in Andreea's settlement.

Importantly, such relations of support are sometimes mutual (see Phillimore et al. 2017). Boniface from Zambia, an asylum seeker living in Birmingham who recounted many problems, talked about how, after becoming more settled, he seeks to pass on the help that he initially received. The church was instrumental in his process of becoming embedded locally and gave him the opportunity to enjoy a mutual sense of humanity.

> … the same help I received, I am able to give to others... and some of the members in our church are going through such things and I'm able to refer them [to support organisations], or even invite them to our house. I say 'please come. I know you may not have it all, but come let's eat together, what I have I give to you, let's eat together, let's have a laugh together'. This is one thing I didn't have, to find someone to laugh, someone that you can go to and express your fears, your anxiety, and just have laughter, just have a barbecue. But this place, this church, provided that platform.

As Boniface became more socially embedded he could support other newcomers to settle and develop a sense of belonging. Mirza also recounted how organising social events for children from the wider Ahmadi community enabled him to deepen his connection to the local community as well as enjoy being able to give something back after having a difficult time when he was an asylum seeker.

To describe these processes of mutual support among migrants, Phillimore et al. (2017) use the notion of 'informal reciprocity'. They show how migrants routinely 'gave time, shared information, offered their language skills and sometimes their limited financial resources to strangers' (2017:8). While many were initially recipients of such informal reciprocity, once established, they reciprocated to others, which enabled them to form new relationships.

The relationships with crucial acquaintances discussed in this section go beyond the fleeting, but cannot be described as friendships because they are not enduring over longer periods or are limited to sites such as workplaces. They provide migrants with both practical help, as well as emotional support, and could thus be described as important part of embedding in various domains. While some of these social relations lead to further resources, not all of them do, and some solely serve a greater sense of belonging within, for example, a neighbourhood or a workplace. In the following section, we look at the role of more enduring friendships which create a deeper sense of embeddedness or feeling at home.

Friendships

Some relationships formed during settlement become not only crucial in terms of practical aspects of settlement, but also in regards to emotionally feeling more at home. Gabriela from Brazil, who came to London via Portugal, was well 'integrated' socio-economically. She is a professional florist, and found work in a flower shop relatively easily. Initially, she lived with a Brazilian family, but found that she had little in common with them, or other Brazilians, and felt socially isolated. An Italian customer mentioned that he had a room to let. She moved in and they became friends. Her Italian flat mate, who had lived in London for 10 years, was crucial in the process of her becoming more socially embedded in London. He introduced her to people, because she needed to 'start her social life in London'. Gabriela thus became part of a large group of friends, mainly consisting of Italians and Spanish speakers. At each party or picnic, she met new people. Being part of this group with whom she shared similar interests gave her a sense of finally becoming socially embedded. Despite her socio-economic independence, frequently used as an indicator of integration (Ager & Strang 2008), only once she had befriended her Italian housemate did she begin to feel emotionally and socially at home.

Sometimes, such friendships cross generations. Aika from Kyrgyzstan became good friends with the mother of a white British friend who she met at the grocery shop where she worked. Although highly educated she felt lost in regards to her professional development. Her friend's mother encouraged her to open her own business, sewing clothes, and provided her with fabric. Aika gained much more from her new friend than only practical support:

> So one day I went to work and I broke into tears because I was at the stage when I wasn't sure what I was doing, so one of my friends there said: 'what happened'? And I said,' I just feel lonely but I don't want to go home either, but I think I need to do something but I don't know what'. And she said 'come to dinner to our mum's, relax, maybe you feel like you're part of the house'. So I went to their house the following Sunday and we had a lovely dinner and her mum influenced me massively. She said: 'I think you create relationships, which doesn't mean your mum and dad and relatives are not important, but the most important people are those people who are there for you not because they are your relatives but because they want to'. … And I think somebody else's opinion on life, and telling about her life and her experiences made me (…) decide on things I wanted to do.

Meeting her friend's mother was a turning point for Aika who now runs her own business, selling children's clothes made of African fabric. Here, we can see how processes of emplacement are characterized by this intertwining of friendships through domains such as work, which can, but not always do, lead to practical help in regards to resources. Such relationships are not necessarily with the majority population. Aamina had come from Saudi Arabia to join her husband. Despite being married and, at least in theory, able to connect to his existing network, Aamina felt extremely isolated and eventually separated from her husband after he became violent towards her. Unable to return home and with no connection to Birmingham, and not permitted to work, Aamina felt hopeless. She met a Moroccan woman on the bus. The two began to meet regularly, with her friend offering emotional and practical support. As the friend 'takes care of me like a sister….she is my best friend' Aamina's life improved and she was able to find a home for herself and finally begin to feel a sense of belonging.

The research participants mentioned in this section were lucky in finding people who they describe as friends and who, over time, gave them a sense of rootedness. It is important to mention, however, that some of our research participants felt isolated and found it difficult to form meaningful social relations. This included research participants who were well 'integrated' in terms of their work and housing situation, but isolated socially. Some of the research participants also made what they described as 'fast friends', i.e. acquaintances who entertained each other and offered a way to escape from isolation, but who offered little in the way of resources or sense of belonging. This was the case for Zain, a refugee from Syria, who had gained employment in a fast food restaurant. He 'hung out' with the other young (migrant) men working at the restaurant merely to fill his time but enjoyed no sense of intimacy or even pleasure spending time with them. Similarly, Amina, a Somalian spousal migrant, met some other women through her ESOL classes and sometimes encountered them in the street, but described them as 'hi/bye' friends. Knowing people in the neighbourhood 'helps to feel good' and increased her sense of familiarity with the locality, but ultimately did not give her any sense of emotional connectedness. Her situation contrasts with that of Surinder, a spousal migrant from India, who is desperately seeking employment. Her socio-economic situation is secure given her husband's well-paid job and nice home, but she missed India. It is only after making friends with individuals who have a similar level of education as her, and collectively looking with them for work, that she begins to embed in Birmingham.

The most extreme sense of isolation was experienced by asylum seekers and undocumented migrants, who were not able to settle in one place because of insecure housing and, for the asylum seekers, not knowing the outcome of their claim. Insecure legal status has extensive psychological effects on migrants who prevented from embedding and, consequently, find it difficult to connect socially. In these situations there was evidence that places of worship were extremely important in enabling individuals to have human contact and to find a place where they could belong.

Conclusion

How can we conceptualise the role of social relations in the process of migrant settlement? How can we think beyond notions of bonding and bridging social capital which, when used in public and policy discourse, assume ethnicity and country of origin to be the boundary within and across which migrants form social networks?

This article has described how different types of social relations contribute to different degrees of integration and embeddedness and how relationships evolve over time. These range

from fleeting, to more enduring in associations, churches and the workplace, to deeper friendships. It is not only the more enduring friendships or those with the majority population which lead to resources. While friendships are important in regards to migrants' sense of belonging, serendipitous fleeting encounters can provide much needed information or even just a sense of humanity, which can be crucial to a migrant's life.

We have described the more regular social relations migrants form in places like faith organisations or workplaces as 'crucial acquaintances'. These are relations with people (of both migrant and non-migrant origin) whom our participants did not describe as friends, but who provided them with support, sometimes a sense of belonging or at least being valued as a fellow human. They could thus be considered to constitute a form of social integration and an embedding mechanism. The third type of social relation, friendship, can also be characterized by the provision of support and resources, but the sense of belonging offered by an affective relationship is the most valued resource. The notion of 'sociability of emplacement' fits this kind of relation perfectly, as it refers to the 'actors' mutual sense of being human' and relations which are about commonality rather than difference (Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2016:19). It can also speak to the idea of integration as two-way process, which addresses efforts needed on the part of both migrants as well as the majority population (Jenkins, 1967), although it is important to note that relations with minority or migrant others can be equally as fulfilling in emotional terms and useful for enabling access to integration resources.

Important factors shaping the degree and depth of social relations were legal status and place. Those with an insecure legal status were by far the most isolated. Such findings are hardly surprising given the UK Government's declaration that integration can only begin once migrants have the appropriate legal status (Home Office 2005). It is evident that such attempts to ensure migrants do not embed are to some extent successful for our respondents but that they did not encourage individuals to re-embed in their country of origin, instead leaving them isolated and vulnerable – as Berry (1998) would argue – separated from back home and over here.

Most importantly, whether the research participants felt socially embedded and socio-economically and culturally integrated (in regards to language knowledge, civil participation, etc.) was not necessarily related to whether they had social relations with (white) British people. In fact, it was often other migrants, but not necessarily co-ethnics, who were crucial in their process of settlement and in the process of becoming embedded in the various domains of life in the UK. These other migrants were a step or more ahead in the settlement process, which enabled them to provide support to newcomers.

Migrants formed social relations with other migrants even if they aspired to form social relations with what they described as 'English people'. Most research participants talked about their difficulties of forming friendships with British people, describing them as 'reserved' and less open than other migrants. In some parts of Birmingham, for example Handsworth, the majority population is superdiverse with only 10% white British residents. Thus, arguably, migrants *are* building relationships with the majority who as we demonstrated in our findings, are reaching out to newcomers in wide ranging ways. Ryan and Mulholland (2014) similarly found how their highly skilled French research participants had difficulties making friends with the local, non-migrant population. If social integration is measured by the amount of social relations with white British people, these migrants might thus also be described as not integrated. However, many were well embedded within local social networks of migrants and minorities of various backgrounds who have been there for various lengths of time, yet were not imagined, at least by our respondents, as

British. Their embeddedness and sense of belonging to the place in which they settled was unrelated to the amount of social relations they had with British people, but was very much shaped by the amount of emotionally fulfilling social relations with local people of various national backgrounds who shared similar interests (Wessendorf 2017b). For these migrants, the notion of 'bonding' and 'bridging' social capital, if defined by social relations with the white British majority, makes little sense. If we interpret the boundary across which people form such relations by ethnicity and nationality, all of these migrants formed bridging social relations. Our findings thus offer an original new perspective: that it is not necessarily the forms of bridging social capital with the white majority population described in public and policy discourse which are important for integration. Rather social relations of differing affective and functional depths with a variety of people of both white and ethnic minority British *as well as* migrant background are crucial for settlement. In light of the fact that many newcomers settle in superdiverse contexts rather than those dominated by a white national majority, and that many places are becoming increasingly diverse, ideas about social 'integration' must, and can only reflect, the dimensions of local social opportunity structures. The dichotomy of bonding or bridging capital may not be particularly useful in light of increasing demographic complexity.

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Appendix: Interviewee characteristics

Project 1

Age	**Country of Birth**	**Location**	**Legal Status**	Occupation	**Gender**
35	Chile	London	EU Citizen	Yoga teacher	F
31	Spain	London	EU Citizen	Film technician	M
32	Kyrgyzstan	London	UK Citizen	Own business	F
34	Southern Azerbaijan	London	Refugee	Student	M
40	Argentina	London	EU Citizen	University lecturer	F
42	Colombia	London	UK Citizen	Freelance teacher	F
34	Georgia	London	Spouse	White collar	F
47	Argentina	London	EU Citizen	University lecturer	F
30	Slovakia	London	EU Citizen	Nanny	F
37	Brazil	London	EU Citizen	Florist	F
23	Romania	London	EU Citizen	Student	F
32	Yemen	London	Refugee	Mother	F
32	Chechnya	London	Refugee	Unemployed	F
40	Mauritania	London	EU Citizen	Unemployed	F
26	Chechnya	London	EU Citizen	Unemployed	F
34	Senegal	London	Spouse	Unemployed	F
44	Senegal	London	EU Citizen	Unemployed	F
30	Yemen	London	Asylum seeker	Prohibited	M
31	Uzbekistan	London	Undocumented	Prohibited	M
50	Ivory Coast	London	Refused asylum seeker	Prohibited	M
33	Ivory Coast	London	Refused asylum seeker	Prohibited	F
41	Mali	London	Undocumented	Prohibited	M
25	Yemen	London	Refugee	White collar	F
40	Spain	Birmingham	EU Citizen	Engineer	M
46	Mexico	Birmingham	Spouse	University research	F
43	Zambia	Birmingham	Refugee	Church councilor	M
41	Angola	Birmingham	Work Visa	Dance teacher	M
49	Argentina	Birmingham	EU Citizen	Trampoline Olympic Trainer	F
46	Colombia	Birmingham	Spouse	Beautician	F
36	Mexico	Birmingham	Spouse	Photographer	F
40	India	Birmingham	EU Citizen	Shop assistant	F

37	Hungary	Birmingham	EU Citizen	Teacher	M
35	Hungary	Birmingham	EU Citizen	Painter	F
41	Armenia	Birmingham	UK Citizen	Security guard	M
28	Armenia	Birmingham	Spouse	Receptionist	F
44	Ecuador	Birmingham	EU Citizen	Church councilor	F
30	Belarus	Birmingham	Spouse	School Teacher	F
29	Guinea	Birmingham	Refugee	Unemployed	M
40	Senegal	Birmingham	Spouse	White collar	F
33	Guinea	Birmingham	Asylum seeker	Prohibited	F
36	Ghana	Birmingham	EU Citizen	Cleaner	F
18	Ghana	Birmingham	EU Citizen	College student	M
26	Egypt	Birmingham	Asylum seeker	Prohibited	F
38	Malawi	Birmingham	Asylum seeker	College Student	F
23	Mali	Birmingham	Undocumented	Prohibited	M
54	Ivory Coast	Birmingham	Refugee	Accountant	M
33	Russia	Birmingham	Working Visa	White collar	F
32	Syria	Birmingham	Refugee	Unemployed	M

Project 2

Age	Country of origin	Location	Legal Status	Occupation	Gender
55	Somalia	London	Refugee	Prohibited	M
25	Somalia	London	Spouse	Prohibited	F
28	Morocco	London	Spouse	Unemployed	F
25	India	London	Spouse	Unemployed	F
27	Pakistan	London	Spouse	Unemployed	F
27	Saudi Arabia	London	Spouse	Unemployed	F
23	Bangladesh	London	Spouse	Unemployed	F
41	Nigeria	Luton	Spouse	Care work	M
50	Pakistan	Luton	Economic	Accountant	M
35	India	Wolverhampton	Spouse	Factory	M
29	Syria	Wolverhampton	Refugee	Take away	M
22	Zimbabwe	Wolverhampton	Refugee	Unemployed	F
29	Pakistan	Wolverhampton	Refugee	Retail	M
34	Syria	Wolverhampton	Refugee	Take away	M
37	Nigeria	Wolverhampton	Spouse	Unemployed	M
26	Pakistan	Birmingham	Student	Student	M
40	Pakistan	Birmingham	Asylum Seeker	Leaflet distribution	M
26	Pakistan	Birmingham	Work	Recruitment	M
26	Pakistan	Birmingham	Spouse	Take away	M
25	Pakistan	Birmingham	Work	Machine	M

				Operator	
25	Eritrea	Birmingham	Refugee		M
61	Egypt	Birmingham	Asylum	Prohibited	M
26	Sudan	Birmingham	Asylum	Prohibited	M
53	Kuwait	Birmingham	Asylum	Prohibited	M
26	Pakistan	Birmingham	Student	Car wash	M
28	Eritrea	Birmingham	Refugee		F
40+	Nigeria	London	Work		F
38	Sudan	Birmingham	Spouse		F
37	Sudan	Birmingham	Spouse	Marketing	F